

COUNCIL AGENDA: 08-10-04

ITEM: 5.2

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jane Light

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: July 21, 2004

Approved

Date

7.24.04

Council District: 10

**SUBJECT: LIBRARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION REGARDING
RENAMING OF ALMADEN BRANCH LIBRARY**

RECOMMENDATION

The Library Commission recommends that the City Council retain the name "Almaden Branch Library."

BACKGROUND

In compliance with City Council Policy 7-5, Naming of City Owned Land and Facilities, The City Clerk referred a proposal to change the name of the Almaden Branch Library to the Library Commission for the required public hearing and its recommendation to the City Council. The proposal for a name change cited the many accomplishments and contributions of the late Doris Dillon, a public school teacher and reading-media specialist. She inspired a love of reading in many students, and played a leading role in education and literacy efforts in the local, state, and national levels.

On June 2, 2004, the Library Commission held a public hearing regarding the proposed name change from "Almaden Branch Library" to "Doris Dillon Almaden Valley" Branch Library. This hearing was held at the Vineland Branch Library, which is currently serving the Almaden community while the existing Almaden Branch is closed for reconstruction funded by the 2000 Library and Park Bond Acts. It will reopen in late 2005/early 2006.

Twenty-six people spoke at the well-attended hearing. Fifteen supported the proposed renaming, urging that Ms. Dillon's lasting impact be recognized in this way. Eleven speakers wanted to retain the current name. They felt that the current name is an important part of the community pride and identification of the Almaden neighborhood. One person recommended naming the children's area of the branch the "Doris Dillon Children's Library."

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

July 21, 2004

Subject: Library Commission Recommendation Regarding Renaming of Almaden Branch Library

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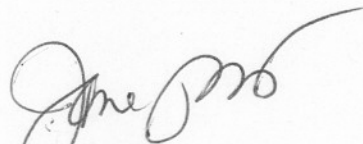
After the hearing was concluded, the Commission discussed the matter. They voted (4-0-2) to recommend to the City Council that the name "Almaden Branch Library" be retained. Although they understood and sympathized with the interest of many to permanently recognize Ms. Dillon's contributions, the Commission based its decision on their experience that neighborhood names for libraries build and reflect the identity and pride of the residents. This hearing and the recent naming process for the Tully Community Branch Library reinforced the fact that a very high hurdle must be met in order to rename a community library. The Commission did not feel that the suggested name change met that high standard. Several Commissioners expressed support for the suggestion that the children's area of the Almaden Branch be named after Ms. Dillon.

COORDINATION

This memo has been coordinated with the Library Commission and the City Attorney's Office.

CEQA

Not a project.



Jane Light
Director, Library Department

Attachment

July 20, 2004

The Honorable Mayor Ron Gonzalez and City Council Members
City of San Jose
801 North First Street, Room 600
San Jose, CA 95110

Re: Proposal to rename the Almaden Branch Library

Dear Mayor Gonzales and City Council Members:

At our June meeting of the San Jose Library Commission, we held a community hearing to discuss the proposed name change of the Almaden Branch Library. The proposal is to honor Doris Dillon, a beloved teacher and librarian in the local public schools. The hearing made two points very clear. The first is that Doris Dillon left a lasting impact on those who had the good fortune of interacting her during her career. The second is that residents of San Jose communities take the naming of their local library branches very seriously.

The commission has come to a fuller appreciation of the second point since our previous discussion concerning the naming of the Tully Community Branch Library. In that instance, there was no coherent opposition to the name change presented to us at our public hearing. In this case, a large number of community members came to the meeting to voice their objection to changing the name. We took those comments very seriously in our discussion.

The conclusion of the Library Commission was that it should require a very high standard to change the name of a community library. The commission did not feel that this instance rose to that level. The commission is also concerned about the precedent that the renaming of this branch would set as we continue progress toward renovating or building branch libraries across the city. These libraries are now easily identified with their communities because most bear a geographical name.

Commissioners were sympathetic to the idea of recognizing Doris Dillon through the naming of a public facility. It was noted that Doris Dillon is already recognized by the naming of the library at the school where she taught, as well as the naming of a facility at the Columbia School of Education. Several commissioners expressed support for an idea from the public to name the children's area in the Almaden Branch Library after Doris Dillon. After all, Ms. Dillon was known for her efforts to encourage children to read and learn.

After taking all these points into consideration, the Library Commission recommends retaining the name "Almaden Branch Library."

Sincerely,


David Cohen
Chair, San Jose Library Commission

